

REMARKS

Claims 1-18 stand allowed. Claims 1-18 and 21-27 remain pending in this application.

The Final Rejection rejects claims 21 and 22 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent 6,085,958 issued to Kersten (hereinafter "Kersten"). Claims 23-27 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as obvious over Kersten.

Claim 21 has now been amended to specify that the "locking portion permanently engages said rod such that the actuator is unable to move back towards the first operative position." Support for the amendment can be found throughout the present application including the drawings and claims as originally filed. See more particularly lines 12-16 on page 21 and lines 10-13 on page 23 of the specification. Moreover, from the reading of the specification, it is clear that, once the actuator has moved upon detonation of the explosive charge, the lock must permanently engage the rod in order to prevent any further movement of the actuator toward its initial position. See notably lines 19-21 on page 1, lines 7-19 on page 8, lines 19-20 on page 10, lines 8-17 on page 12, lines 14-20 on page 14, lines 13-20 on page 20, lines 12-16 on page 21, lines 10-13 on page 23 and Figures 3, 5, 7 and 16.

Kersten does not disclose nor suggest a lock permanently engaging the rod of the piston as recited in amended claim 21. In the Final Office Action, the Examiner indicated that, in the Kersten system, "[b]efore the gas in space 34 is activated, the piston was locked by elements 27, 28, to prevent it from going back to the original position, and that meets the claimed language. The claim does not recite a permanent locking position."

Claim 21 now specifies that the locking portion permanently engages the rod such that the activator is unable to move back toward the first operative position. This feature is

not disclosed or suggested by Kersten. As such, the §102(b) and §103(a) rejections have been obviated and should be withdrawn. Such action is respectfully requested.

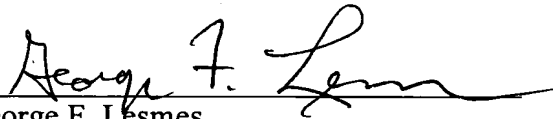
From the foregoing, further and favorable action in the form of a Notice of Allowance is believed to be next in order and such action is earnestly solicited. If there are any questions concerning this paper or the application in general, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at (703) 838-6683 at his earliest convenience.

Respectfully submitted,

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